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SUBJECT: JUBA/DARFUR: CONVERGANCE CONTINUES, NOW WITH THE JANJAWEEED

¶1. (SBU) SPLM Darfur Taskforce Member (DTF) Edward Lino informed ConGen PolOff that Musa Hilal will be arriving in Juba on December 15. Expected to spend at least two days in the South's capital, the Janjaweed leader will be meeting with a cross-section of newly-consolidated Darfur rebel movements and have separate discussions with the Taskforce. Possible discussions with Government of Southern Sudan officials are on hold pending the interaction between Hilal and the United Resistance Front and Sudan Liberation Movement. Lino termed the talks "a constructive dialogue focused on the future," and plans on encouraging the United Nations and African Union to delay movement of rebel groups back to Darfur (planned for later this week) until discussions with Hilal have concluded.

¶2. (SBU) Hilal contacted DTF Chairman Clement Janda about the possibility of traveling to Juba in early November following positive readouts from the first round of consolidation talks. Janda emphasized that Hilal was free to travel throughout Sudan, and that he would be "welcomed to Juba with open arms if he came in the name of peace." DTF members broached possibility of a Hilal-Movements meeting with rebel representatives last week. Lino maintains no one has objected to such a meeting to date. "This is how things happen in Sudan - we can be very open when we remain true to our roots. Musa is still very much a tribesman. He has given his word that he will be open to dialogue, and I believe he will keep it."

¶3. (SBU) Following Hilal's visit to Juba, Taskforce members will accompany URF and SLM members back to Darfur to observe their briefings to field commanders, emphasize the importance of unification, and secure SLM-Unity's agreement to include itself in further consolidation talks in Juba. Lino anticipates a return to Juba approximately ten days after his Darfur deployment to renew smaller-level talks between URF, SLM, and SLM-Unity dedicated to selecting a negotiating team and issues-platform for the Sirte Process. Lino optimistically spoke of utilizing the outcome Hilal's visit as an important foundation for a future Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation, and ensuring that any agreement entered into in Libya had broad-based support.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: The relative success of the SPLM's Darfur rebel reunification process has reached another milestone with Musa Hilal's visit. Long notorious as the best known of the feared Janjaweed, Hilal (and many Darfur Arab tribal leaders) is reportedly concerned about being made the convenient scapegoat for Khartoum's bloody policies in Darfur. The SPLM's continued engagement on this issue will continue to raise hackles among National Congress Party (NCP) leaders who fear "convergence" of the two major challenges they face, Darfur and CPA, most of all. End comment.
FERNANDEZ